

Western Kansas Counties Suffer more than \$360 Million in Damages from Severe Winter Storm

Moran Sponsors Legislation to Assist Farmers and Ranchers Suffering from Losses

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) today informed Congressman Jerry Moran that FEMA and the Kansas Adjutant General's office have completed the preliminary damage assessment for the 44 western Kansas counties affected by the late December winter storm. The estimated damage to public infrastructure exceeds more than \$360 million and qualifies Kansas counties for all seven categories of public assistance through FEMA.

"The damage assessment numbers are astounding," Moran said. "This storm was a huge financial shock for our communities. This assistance will provide much needed relief to state and local governments with such things as debris removal, public utilities and roads."

On January 7, President Bush signed a presidential disaster declaration for the State of Kansas and made federal funds available for recovery efforts in affected communities. The numbers released today qualify Kansas counties for all categories of public assistance, including debris removal, emergency protective measures, road systems and bridges, water control facilities, public buildings and contents, public utilities, and parks and recreational facilities. More than \$350 million accounts for damage to public utilities alone, mainly power lines.

Moran is also working with U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Secretary Mike Johanns to obtain assistance from USDA for farmers and ranchers.

While the FEMA assistance only goes to public entities, Moran today sponsored agricultural disaster assistance legislation to aid farmers and ranchers suffering from the effects of natural disasters. The legislation would cover losses incurred in 2005, 2006 or 2007.

"This legislation will not only help farmers and ranchers dealing with effects of the winter storm, but also the drought conditions of the last two summers," Moran said.

The 44 counties included in the disaster designations include Cheyenne, Clark, Comanche, Decatur, Edwards, Ellis, Finney, Ford, Gove, Graham, Grant, Gray, Greeley, Hamilton, Haskell, Hodgeman, Jewell, Kearny, Kiowa, Lane, Logan, Meade, Morton, Ness, Norton, Osborne, Pawnee, Phillips, Rawlins, Rooks, Rush, Russell, Scott, Seward, Sheridan, Sherman, Smith, Stafford, Stanton, Stevens, Thomas, Trego, Wallace and Wichita.

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